

the one hand, and the medical profession on the other; and conflicts between these two forces have occurred in almost every country where compulsory health insurance has been adopted. It is therefore imperative that the medical profession study carefully the problems that may arise, in order that it may guard its interests should such legislation be proposed or adopted.

The proposed plans guarantee two types of benefit to the insured in the event of illness. First, a cash benefit amounting to a certain proportion of his previous income; and second, medical care, which includes the services of a physician or of physicians, drugs, mechanical appliances and, if need be, hospital care. Your committee is unable to suggest any method whereby insurance carriers can furnish medical care without serious objections on the part of many physicians. In the first place, it is not certain that the total sum received by the profession under the proposed change would equal that which it now receives from the same classes of patients. Even though we assume for the sake of argument that the total sum will equal or will even exceed what is now received, it will be distributed differently, for the new distribution will be more or less controlled by the state and by the insurance carriers. The transition to this new set of conditions would undoubtedly work a hardship to many in the profession. It may be argued that under state control the selection of physicians would be more just than under the system of absolutely free choice now in force. This might be true under ideal conditions of governmental control; but the experiences of the past, particularly with respect to medical licensure, antivivisection laws, and industrial accident insurance, does not inspire the profession with confidence in the state control of medicine. Should at some time this control fall into the hands of those out of sympathy with the profession or should it be used for the promotion of political purposes, then a large part of the profession would find itself at the mercy of an unjust or corrupt central control. And in the end such a condition could not fail to lessen the standard of medical service rendered to the community as a whole.

Your committee therefore feels that from the standpoint of the medical profession it can endorse compulsory health insurance only in so far as it provides a cash benefit for the insured in the event of illness. If medical care were not provided this cash benefit could be greater than it would be otherwise. Under such a plan the patient would receive a cash benefit but the relations between patients and their physicians would remain as they now are. The committee realizes that this plan will not satisfy many who are at present advocating compulsory health insurance, for the reason that under this plan the sick benefits would often be insufficient to meet the expenses of illness. Nevertheless, the committee believes that the medical profession would prefer to follow its present custom of minimal charges in such cases rather than risk the uncertainties of state control together with an alteration in the personal relation that now exists between physician and patient.

Book Reviews

Clinical and Laboratory Technic. By H. L. McNeil. Illustrated. St. Louis: Mosby. 1916.

This little volume is the lamentable result of attempting too great a condensation of technical methods. It is a mere smattering and enumeration of the tests and methods employed rather than a description and interpretation. This book is so close to the quiz-compend type that it cannot be recommended as of the slightest practical value.

G. H. T.

Care of Patients Undergoing Gynecologic and Abdominal Procedures, Before, During, and After Operation. By E. E. Montgomery, M. D., Professor of Gynecology in Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. 12mo of 149 pages with 61 illustrations. Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company. 1916. Cloth, \$1.25 net.

This little book is the outgrowth, the author says, of some typewritten instructions prepared for his assistants. It consists of a chapter on preparations for laparotomy and a discussion of possible complications, and following, of short descriptions of the technique of the various gynecological and of a few other abdominal operations. The explanations are short, but should be sufficient for nurses assisting in the operating room; they are entirely sensible, and no nurse will go amiss in following them.

L. E.

Cancer, Its Cause and Treatment. By L. Duncan Bulkley, A. M., M. D. New York: Paul B. Hoeber. 1915. Price, \$1.50.

In this book Bulkley seeks to develop the theory that cancer is a constitutional disease whose incidence seems to follow closely along the lines of modern civilization. He thinks that this extension of cancer depends largely upon the altered conditions of life, particularly upon self-indulgence in eating, drinking and indolence. He considers the increase in the consumption of meat, alcohol and coffee, together with the increased nerve-strain, acting through a disturbance of metabolism as well as directly on the morbid cell itself to be of importance. He thinks that the institution of dietetic, hygienic and medicinal measures may offer some curative and much prophylactic promise.

L. E.

An Inquiry into the Principles of Treatment of Broken Limbs; a Philosophico-Surgical Essay with Surgical Notes. By William F. Fluhrer. M. D. New York: Rebman Co. 1916.

This high-sounding title designates an essay advocating the treatment of fractures of the lower extremity by means of a fixation apparatus made of tin strips and plaster of paris bandages. The method was evolved in the '70's—and the book belongs to the '70's. Many of its principles are incorrect, but the treatise gives a number of useful hints in bandaging—a heritage from the days when bandaging was an art, and a slovenly dressing an opprobrium. Besides the essay on fractures it contains a chapter on the open treatment of amputations that is full of good suggestions, notes on sepsis in the New York hospitals in the '70's, and a chapter describing some bone instruments of the author's invention. The book is smothered in philosophical verbiage, but is interesting historically.

L. E.

The Practical Medicine Series. Comprising ten volumes on the year's progress in medicine and surgery. Under the general editorial charge of Chas. L. Mix, A. M., M. D. Chicago: Yearbook publishers. 1916.

Obstetrics. Vol. 7. Edited by J. B. DeLee and H. M. Stowe. Price, \$1.35. Contents: Pregnancy. Labor. Puerperium. New-born. Obstetrics in general.

Materia Medica and Therapeutics. Preventive Medicine. Vol. 8. Edited by Geo. F. Butler and W. A. Evans. Price, \$1.50. Contents: Drugs, extracts of animal organs, bacterial preparations, serums and vaccines. Electricity, Roentgen rays, radium and radio-active substances. Physician and public health work. General sanitation. Personal hygiene. Infant welfare. Inspection of school